Volume LXXXVI No. 22 September 29, 1967 30 cents

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BOY-MAN SCHLEMIEL: JEWISH HUMOR

Albert Goldman

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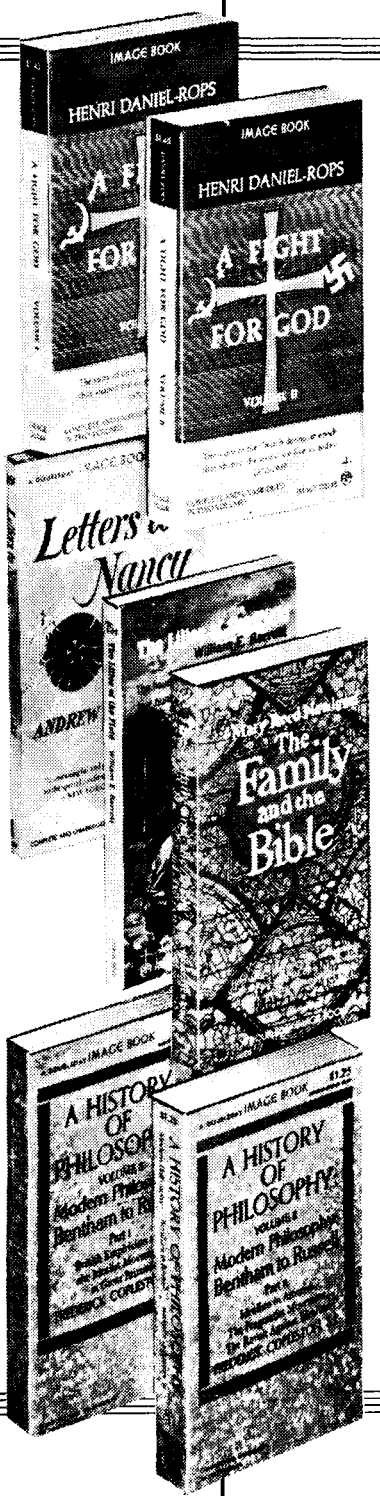

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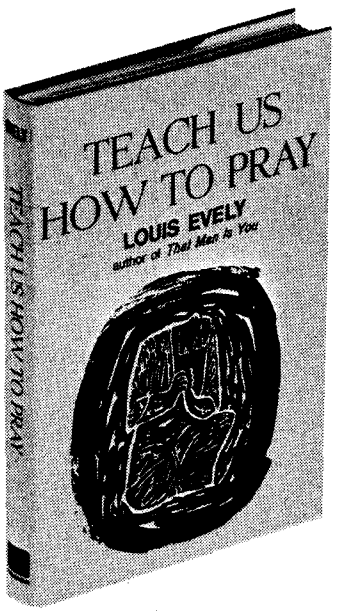

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NEWS AND VIEWS

If there are many left who wonder about the disenchantment of the peace community with the Catholic Association for International Peace, a couple of sentences from a recent statement by CAIP president William V. O'Brien should explain all.

In a protest to President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk over U.S. bombings in and near Hanoi as a population center, O'Brien declared: "Those of us in the Catholic Association for International Peace who have supported the Administration's Vietnamese policies have appreciated the limited-war concepts that have guided U.S. defense policies. Many of us have deplored the radical and unfair criticism which some elements in the peace movement have leveled against our government."

O'Brien—speaking for himself but still very much out of character, it seems, for a peace organization president—included the affirmation: "I support the general policy of the United States government in Vietnam."

By contrast, the Christian Family Movement, which one hardly thinks of as a peace organization, named a committee at its recent national convention "to promote establishment of a United States Peace Academy."

In the viewpoint of advocates, the academy would offer a four-year curriculum, with courses oriented so that peace became an attitude of mind. Like other U.S. service academy graduates, those from the Peace Academy would be required to serve in governmental programs—but programs for peace.

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Prediction Fulfilled Dept.:

The full-time editorial staff of the *Delmarva Dialog,* the beset newsweekly of the Diocese of Wilmington, has followed the action taken by Editor John O'Connor and resigned as a body.

In a statement that echoed O'Connor's bristling "Behind the Story" editorial of last June, Robert Keller, Agostino Bono and Mary Salazar stated: "All three of us came here because we believed that the corporate structure of the Catholic Press of Wilmington as established by Bishop Hyle would insure a free, open Catholic press. Unfortunately, this has not proved true . . . We believed the newspaper was established to serve all the people of Delmarva, not just the bishop and his palace guard."

Keller, Bono and Salazar intend to stay in journalism, but none with the diocesan press. O'Connor is open to a bid from the diocesan press, but it is unlikely one will be forthcoming; the diocesan press is playing it cool these days and O'Connor is a hot commodity.

Meanwhile, the *Delmarva Dialog* is being edited by James P. Parks Jr., a Wilmington *News-Journal* staffer on leave. Rumor has it that a local priest is being groomed to take over eventually.

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Co-eds at Catholic University last Summer sported lapel buttons reading: "I am *not* a nun." They say most weren't.

•

Not many people are saying nice things these days about Milwaukee's Father James Groppi, so maybe this is the moment to recall the candid, admiring words spoken of him by Msgr. John Egan, who has fought the good fight himself in Chicago, lo these many years, and who knows whereof he speaks:

"People have written me that they do not like nor admire Father Groppi's style, his manner of approach, his seemingly unbending convictions, his strong voice which doesn't permit painless sleep. Let me give assent to their charges that his cry is ofttimes strident, his voice shrill and his step heavy. But let me quickly add that this man of God and this friend of man would quickly step aside and open the ranks to others than the very few in Milwaukee who cry to God that these injustices be ended—the critics, the men of power, the affluent and the educated—to join the cause of righting wrongs and winning for the Negro what they demand for themselves: a voice, the voice, in determining their own destiny and possessing the power and the influence to control their own affairs.

"Father Groppi's voice, however harsh the tones and the rhetoric, is reaching to the far corners of the world as men battle for air, for food and for freedom. And the single voice is picked up by the millions who say that these (unjust) conditions must stop and they must stop now."

More recent and, in many respects, more significant support for Father Groppi has come from his Ordinary, Archbishop William E. Cousins of Milwaukee. Under intense pressure (largely from Catholics) to repudiate Groppi, Archbishop Cousins courageously refused. "Do I agree with everything that Father Groppi has said and done?" the archbishop asked. "I certainly do not." But, he added, "people are so disturbed by his actions that they lose sight of the cause for which he is fighting, that of freedom and human dignity. As Christians we favor the same just cause."

•

Shaking up the old guard is a young priest's valediction in the August issue of *The Priest* (of all places) of the euphemism "priestly priest."

Pittsburgh priest Father John Groutt writes: "When a New Breeder hears the term 'priestly priest' today it turns him off. To him the terms means unimaginative and stale sermons, sloppy and amateurish business practices, unenlightened pedagogical methods, a docile and dependent caricature of a man, and parish life which is of a past and dying age."

•

West Coast opponents of the war in Vietnam plan a serious campaign of non-violent obstruction of the war effort for the Fall. Among tactics under consideration: to roll a bus load of bogus draftees into an induction center, with instructions to scatter to all parts of the center and handcuff themselves to immovable objects. Other "surprises" are promised.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Toes in Marmalade

Paris, France

To the Editors: While I appreciate Mr. Coffey's praise for my stories (Aug. 25), I wish he had read them with a little more attention. No one carries a dead baby in an overnight bag—Mr. Coffey is really too gullible. Perhaps he believes too that there was really a toe in the marmalade. GRAHAM GREENE

The Liturgy "Crisis"

Notre Dame, Ind.

To the Editors: Rosemary Haughton's excellent plea (Aug. 25) for open authorized liturgical experimentation was urgently needed. Let us hope she did not speak too late; the crisis is already far advanced.

I have a single reservation about her practical proposals. It seems to me that from the very outset a sharper distinction between small-group and large-group liturgies is necessary. Mrs. Haughton suggests beginning experiments with small communities and some years later considering the possibility of extending the experiments to, say, large parishes before final decisions are made. Should we not simply assume from everyday experience that large groups need their own style of celebration and plan accordingly? Experimentation with family picnics can improve family picnics; it is not so helpful in improving the big organization dinner in the hotel dining room.

Actually, some of the shortcomings which small groups experience with present structures stem from the historical imposition of papal and episcopal forms on "presbyteral" celebrations and finally on all celebrations, even those of a quasi-private or "domestic" character. Many elements in our present eucharistic liturgy—processions, standardized greetings and responses, presidential gestures on the grand scale, carefully prepared formularies having a rather general content, stylized manifestations of

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COMMONWEAL A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.
Second-class postage paid in Philadelphia, Pa. Printed in the USA and published weekly, except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and July-September, by Commonweal Publishing Co, 232 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. Copyright © 1967 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.
US and Canada, $9 a year. Foreign $11.

DISSENT AT A DEAD END

Long before Lyndon B. Johnson (and whether or not they had ever heard of Isaiah), Americans implicitly believed that men *can* reason together and that rational debate is the normal civilized prelude to political understanding and eventual agreement, or at least reasonable compromise. And, whenever consensus was not immediately achieved, citizens had recourse to dissent, individually or in groups, protected by constitutional guarantees.

Yet, the war in Vietnam, the mounting fury in the ghettoes, and the whole intent and direction of the poverty program have shattered not only President Johnson's "consensus," a fragile thing to begin with, but, more importantly, they have also brought the various forms of American political dissent to a dead end. The dissent was first of all verbal: university debates, Congressional speeches, books, articles, petitions to the President, full-page advertisements in newspapers, even television jokes. Then dissent became more active: sit-ins, marches, demonstrations, riots and, on a smaller scale, refusal to pay taxes and a willingness to go to jail or Canada rather than be drafted. But none of these forms of dissent has managed to change the drift of American policy, at home or abroad. On the contrary, the war has escalated again and again; white resistance to Negro demands has hardened; Congress steadily hacks away at the poverty program.

Where do we go from here? H. Rap Brown has warned that this country has got to "turn around." He may have put his finger on why neither traditional politics nor current dissent is working. Both depend on a fundamental agreement about what is important for the United States and its people. But the nation is divided precisely over what kind of society America ought to be—one primarily ordered to private enterprise and private affluence, responding only to private interest groups, whether labor unions or oil companies, or a society that puts the public first.

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This is an ideological question and as such does not sit well with the American temperament. Until Americans turn around to confront it, however, the outlook is for more violence and greater divisions among the American people. The question will underlie all the talk and hoopla of the coming presidential election, although as things look now, it is perhaps too much to hope that any of the candidates will even mention it.

BILLION DOLLAR BUBBLE

If the riots this summer have revived the white backlash, it is probably in part because the whites have been reminded that while American cities have become intolerable for them as well, only the Negroes were likely to get any help. No one who lives in a large city in our affluent society need look far to conclude that it is literally coming apart. "Crime in the streets" is not only a anti-black slogan, it is a reflection of a general dismay with the urban condition which now includes "Grime in the lungs" as well as dilapidated housing and transportation, civic corruption, police brutality, ear-splitting noise and quotidian violence committed on the human spirit.

All summer long mayors trooped to Washington, doleful supplicants for federal money which was presumably better engaged elsewhere. Even Vice President Humphrey conceded that what was needed was a domestic "Marshall Plan," though this idea was promptly scuttled by the White House.

Now, Lyndon Johnson has jubilantly proclaimed that a consortium of the nation's largest insurance companies have been persuaded to invest $1 billion in slum and ghetto areas, mostly in projects whose tenants qualify for federal rent supplements. Spurred by an about-face by the FHA, whose loan policies have themselves heavily contributed to the "white noose" around the city centers, the insurance companies will hopefully attract other private capital to the slums.

Unfortunately, the Johnson announcement has all the earmarks of another razzle-dazzle gimmick. It not only coincides with and upstages hearings on the Robert Kennedy proposals, which are similar but broader, and with the introduction of Senator Clark's bill to provide $2½ billion for emergency jobs and urban redevelopment, but also with mounting pressure on the Hill to investigate the life insurance firms and, in the words of *The Wall Street Journal*, "the apparent lack of effective price competition." Likewise it will probably quash debate on Rep. Conyers bill to provide $30 billion a year to the cities.

Johnson may have again scored a front-page coup over Senator Kennedy and alternative projects designed to engage the government more fully in urban reconstruction, but he has again made it plain that while he is playing a smart game of politics, he is continuing to sell all of us short.

Public Interest and the Ford Strike

Big strikes, like wars, are punctuation points in history, moments which invite inner analysis to see how far society has moved toward or away from social justice.

When 154,000 auto workers shut down the Ford empire on Sept. 6, Henry Ford II expressed his regret "that we do not have laws that effectively prevent the use of this kind of bludgeon against the public interest." Ordinarily Mr. Ford is on the other side of the argument: he denounces government laws which interfere with the operation of private institutions, as for instance when Congress last year decided that autos must be built according to higher standards of safety. But he is willing to reverse himself this year in the face of the danger that the public may buy Plymouths instead of Fords. The "public interest" indeed is involved in this strike (and the one that looms behind it, at General Motors), but not exactly in the way Mr. Ford understands it. The question is: What shares shall workers and the public receive of the technological gains and swollen profits of industrial goliaths? Put in another way, how much shall the corporations be permitted to get away with?

► Item: Twenty years ago Ford's net worth was a mere $771 million; today it is $4.8 billion; for General Motors, the figures are $1.4 billion then, $8.7 billion now; Chrysler, $283 million, today $1.7 billion. For 20 years Walter Reuther's union has wielded the same bludgeon, but if the companies' record of 600 percent growth is any barometer, the UAW's big stick has not been very damaging.

► Item: In the last five years Ford profits *after taxes* have averaged 22 percent a year; Chrysler's, 20 percent; General Motors, 25 percent—as against an average for *all* manufacturing companies of 12 percent.

► Item: In those same five years, while wages and fringe benefits—according to the companies—went up by 29 percent, profits pyramided by 52 percent at Ford, 101 at GM, and 1,605 percent at Chrysler; cash dividends rose by 60 percent, 82 percent and 733 percent, respectively.

These figures attest to one of two things: either the American people are not getting their fair share from the auto industry—in the form of taxes—or the auto workers aren't—in the form of wages. At a time when the nation desperately needs funds for housing, education and anti-poverty measures, the most important of American industries (in dollars and cents) is excused from contributing its fair share. The automobile industry camouflages, with florid rhetoric about "bludgeons" and the union's alleged disregard for the "public interest," its own determination to grab all that the traffic will bear.

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For 20 years the industry and the union have had a unique type of wage agreement. Workers get two kinds of increases. Each three months, based on the U.S. price index, they get a raise based on the increase in the cost of living. Each year they receive the "annual improvement factor" increase—now 2.8 percent—based on the *presumed* improvement in productivity. In the negotiations this year the Big Three—with strange unanimity—proposed to limit cost-of-living raises to once a year and they put a ceiling on the raises as well. The total wage package, in an enormously prosperous period, would thus be less than a penny more than in previous years and for higher job classifications even less. On other matters, too, the package offered was stingy—no increase in holidays or vacations. The guaranteed annual wage sought by the union and equal wages for Canadian workers (now about 40¢ an hour less) elicited no response. The guaranteed salary would cost little or nothing, since the present funds for supplemental unemployment benefits, based on a nickel per hour, have grown so astronomically that management would not be required to add much to raise the guarantee from 62 percent of weekly wages to 100 percent. Yet even on this proposal there has been no "give," as the unionists put it.

According to the UAW, the employers are increasing productivity by more than 6 percent a year, not 2.8 percent as is assumed in the "annual improvement factor." But the Ford company refused to open its books to show just how much its efficiency does increase per year. Vice-President Malcolm Denise insisted that wages should not "jiggle up or down as our productivity or efficiency happens to," and he rejected an offer to turn the matter over to arbitration based on productivity and profits. He and Ford preferred to take a strike rather than open the company's ledgers to public perusal. Interestingly, Ford took the opposite tack just after World War II, insisting then that wage increases must be tied to "better productivity."

If this were all there was to the Ford-UAW contest it would be fairly irrelevant to the public interest. But Ford is only the initial target—the real one is General Motors, the hard core of employer resistance. Here the union has tolerated substandard conditions which, in UAW's estimate, add 10¢ an hour to management's coffers. The grievance machinery and control of work standards are so rigged that thousands of disputes which might be settled favorably at Ford and Chrysler, are settled adversely for the workers at GM. Also, anything that is not specifically written into the GM agreement becomes a management right, rather than something to be discussed and resolved—so that job speeds and work standards are considerably inferior to what they are elsewhere.

Ford was chosen as the original target because it is weaker and will require less strike benefit payments. Seven hundred union representatives working for UAW have had their salaries cut by 25 percent. In November the cut will be 50 percent, as a gesture of solidarity with the strikers. A special convention will raise dues and assessments for working members, so that when the GM battle begins the union hopes to be in a better position. Everyone at Solidarity House knows that, once Ford is disposed of, the big push will be directed at General Motors.

UAW leaders are not happy at this prospect because they have a realistic appreciation of GM's massive power. For all practical purposes this corporation is a monopoly. Not only does it do about half the nation's business in autos and trucks, but it also produces and sells enough parts to both its competitors—Ford and Chrysler—so that at any time it wants to it can cut them down to pygmies. If it doesn't, it is not out of any charitable or "public interest" motives but out of fear of the anti-trust laws. No corporation in the nation, with the possible exception of A.T.&.T., is so fearful of the trust stigma as GM.

If Congress truly wants to protect the "public interest," it would do well to stop fidgeting with ideas for compulsory arbitration and look into the financial structure of America's major industry *now*. Or perhaps Ralph Nader, with his talent for digging up the facts, will shift from investigating the lesser foibles of the industry—unsafe brakes, tires, dashboards—in favor of the more important ones, monopoly, public gouging. SIDNEY LENS

(*Sidney Lens is an editor of* Liberation *magazine and author of* Radicalism in America [*Crowell*].)

The Grand Tour: from Quebec to Warsaw

To judge President de Gaulle's recent visit to Poland a failure because it ended "without accords on key issues," as the New York *Times* did on Sept. 13, is to misunderstand the General's style of diplomacy or to yield to understandable irritation with this "strange, endearing but impossible" statesman, as Harold Macmillan aptly defines him in the second volume of his memoirs. That the French President did not travel to Poland to seek accords with that country's Communist leaders on such pivotal problems as the reunification of Germany is obvious from the fact that only three relatively short political discussions were scheduled during the General's week-long tour.

As always, the General's political designs were of a far grander and more elusive nature that requires years, decades and the inexorable push of history to be accomplished. It is often the seemingly casual remark that reveals the General's purpose and thought far more clearly than his public allocution, as, for instance, his speech to the Polish *Sejm* (Parliament) or his address to the Polish nation over the government television network. At the reception at the French Embassy in Warsaw for members

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of the French colony in the Polish capital, de Gaulle said that France's genuine and lasting friendship for Poland was determined by both "political and sentimental considerations, and we must not separate the two."

The sentiment was in the French President's remembrance of Captain de Gaulle who served with the Polish forces of Marshal Pilsudski, that routed the invading Russian Bolshevik army on the very outskirts of Warsaw in 1920. The emotion was in de Gaulle's pilgrimage to the medieval royal castle and cathedral in Cracow, to view standards, tapestries and trophies of past glory; in his flattery of Polish nationalism, as when he called the Poland of the present a "popular, solid, respectable and powerful reality." Or, when he stressed France's historical championship of Polish independence against Prussian and Russian imperialism. "What I would like you to feel," de Gaulle said in Warsaw, "is that France has always wanted Poland to exist. In our eyes, others have not always wanted this to be so."

On the political side, the General sought to encourage greater Polish independence from the Soviet Union by adding a new refrain to his old theme of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals." On this occasion he spoke, as Neal Ascherson of the London *Observer* sarcastically remarked, of a Europe "divided into three parts like Gaul: West, East and Central Europe." He unabashedly invited the Poles to "develop their national substance, influence and power, whatever the pressure of the colossi of the universe." While stressing his support for the Oder-Neisse river frontier as the permanent Western boundary of Poland, he did not hesitate to remind the Poles, who were themselves four times in the past two centuries dismembered through the connivance of Russia and Germany, that the present partition of Germany constitutes an "abnormal situation" which "must be settled by the Germans themselves within the framework of an agreement of Western, Central and Eastern Europe."

Though obviously impressed by the General's unique personality and his bold concepts, the Polish leaders understandably went out of their way to stress that the alliance with the Soviet Union is the cornerstone of Poland's foreign policy and that the continued existence of the puppet East German regime offers the best guarantee for Poland's national security. But it must be obvious even to Gomulka and Poland's President Ochab that the continued division of Germany in an age of nationalism creates a dangerous element of instability in Central Europe and can be maintained only through the permanent garrisoning of Eastern Germany by Soviet soldiers.

Since on these crucial European issues no accord was seriously sought or could be found, the communiqué issued before de Gaulle's return to Paris stressed the identity of views of the two governments on such issues as the imperativeness of a U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and their desire for a strengthening of bilateral Franco-Polish cultural and economic ties.

In this latter sense de Gaulle's visit contributes to a further relaxation of tensions between Eastern and Western Europe. The expanded cultural and economic exchanges as well as the proposed state visit of Gomulka to Paris sometime next year cannot but lessen the almost total psychological and political dependence of the Polish leadership on Moscow. This achievement is more significant than the failure of the General to meet Poland's Primate, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, which was made inopportune by objections of the Polish Communist leadership. As a result the contact between the President of France and Poland's spiritual leader were reduced to a respectful exchange of letters. Despite this somewhat disappointing aspect of de Gaulle's Polish stay, Pope Paul gave the state visit his warm personal support. Speaking during his regular Sunday appearance at his palace window to bless the thousands massed in St. Peter's square, Pope Paul alluded to the French President's Polish visit by praising the "voyages of chiefs of state" who are "guided by noble intentions for peace."

MATTHEW MESTROVIC

(Matthew Mestrovic is a previous contributor and a member of the faculty at New York University.)

On Being Single in South Bend

Notre Dame

Father John O'Brien's opening remarks to more than 200 persons gathered at Notre Dame for the symposium on "Clerical Celibacy: An Option for Priesthood?" sounded prophetically true. He quoted Victor Hugo: "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world and that is an idea whose time has come." According to Father O'Brien, one idea whose time has now come is optional celibacy for Latin-rite priests. In support of this view he drew on no less an authority than Pope Paul VI, who declared in his recent encyclical, *The Development of Peoples*: "Where the inalienable right to marriage and procreation is lacking, human dignity has ceased to exist," O'Brien concluded that this inalienable, God-given human right must also belong to those who have chosen the priesthood in the Latin Church.

Following Father O'Brien's fiery speech, the cool papers appeared, as one scholar after another presented the insights of his discipline on the subject of clerical celibacy. The option of marriage was examined in turn by Father Joseph Fichter, a sociologist; Father Ignatius Hunt, a scripture scholar; Father R. J. Bunnik, a Dutch theologian; Dr. Joseph English, a psychiatrist, and Dr. John T. Noonan, historian. The viewpoint of the Eastern tradition was explored by Dr. Petro Bilaniuk, and that of Protestant experience by Dr. Julian Casserley, an Anglican priest.

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As the papers were presented, an overall picture came into focus. Clearly the argument was not over a married or celibate clergy, but over the requirement of celibacy for the priests of the Western Church. Optional celibacy was defended by each speaker, and the positive contribution it has to make to the life of the Church was appreciated by everyone. "Celibacy is necessary to preserve the health of marriage," Father Casserley said, adding: "Clerical marriage is necessary for the health of clerical celibacy as clerical celibacy is necessary for the health of clerical marriage. We need the contrast of good men accepting different things to remind each that he has not embraced everything."

An address by Alfred McBride, a member of the advisory board of the National Association for Pastoral Renewal, which sponsored the symposium, reviewed the reasons for calling the forum on celibacy. Citing surveys, letters and the numbers departing from the active priesthood, and having spoken of those "who wish to marry and still remain in the active ministry of the Church," Father McBride warned: "We cannot and should not lightly dismiss what appears to be an increasing and insistent petition from men who have proved themselves to the Church."

Dr. Joseph English, chief psychiatrist of the Peace Corps from 1962-66 and now a professor at the George Washington School of Medicine, saw the choice of celibacy or marriage as desirable for growth: ". . . not necessarily because a mature sexual relationship is good, but because choice is good, . . . psychologically, growth equals life."

It would be foolish to consider a disciplinary change of such dimensions without recognizing that our Protestant brothers have already traveled the same path and that therefore much can be learned from them. Whatever the problems introduced by clerical marriage, Father Casserley declared, "it was a theological impropriety to force celibacy on the clergy." Although the value of a married clergy can plausibly be doubted, he said, the inadequacy of required celibacy cannot be.

The papers of Dr. Noonan and Dr. Bilaniuk dealt with the attitude toward celibacy in the Fathers and in the Eastern tradition. That this is a problem at all seems strange in a Church which has had 40 married popes! The argument against allowing the marriage of priests *after* ordination is often based on the non-existence of such a tradition. However, the decision of Pope Clement V in the fourteenth century permitted this practice in the East. Dr. Bilaniuk asked parenthetically whether what Clement had done in the fourteenth century, Paul might not do in the twentieth.

The careful scholarship of the Benedictine Father Hunt produced this conclusion: "In *no* case in the Bible can it be said that celibacy is linked to the ministerial priesthood in any formal manner. As a matter of fact, Genesis 2-3 shows us very clearly how much the celibate state demands by way of sublimation of a basic and powerful drive of human nature, and how normal is the complementarity of the sexes . . . [Celibacy] moves along with other Christian ideals, such as poverty, but apart from a divine command; it remains an option as far as the biblical information is concerned."

A question in the minds of many was whether Pope Paul's encyclical *On Priestly Celibacy* closed the issue to further discussion. Father Bunnik noted that far from stopping exploration of the subject, it has actually given impetus to a new form of decision-making begun in Vatican II. Now we are beginning to witness the way in which papal documents will open up or continue dialogue but never become the final word in a living Church where "no form of discipline is of necessity permanent and unchangeable."

One left the National Association for Pastoral Renewal's three-day meeting with ambivalent feelings, yet feelings more intense than one is accustomed to experience even in today's rapidly evolving Church. On the intellectual level were the papers, scientific, scholarly and specific. On the emotional level there was contagious excitement. Whatever the final resolution of the question, many of those present in South Bend had undergone a powerful experience. The effect was to ignite the minds and hopes of the lower clergy.

The feeling was similar to that experienced in the best days of Vatican II. Hope rose because, as Father Fichter put it, "along with birth control, it [celibacy] seems to have become the symptom of so much that needs the spirit of renewal . . . The stance for or against optional celibacy in the clergy seems to be a symptom, rather than a cause, of the progressive or conservative stance on Church renewal." The "voiceless" priests were speaking, and all too clearly getting a hearing from the press and thus the nation and the world.

Many of the participants had begun the deliberations with misgivings. During the three days both the issues involved and the direction which a solution must take became clear. Thus it was with a deep concern for the service of the People of God and the vast problems facing the Church in the modern world that the symposium members voted unanimously to urge the bishops "that diocesan priests of the Latin Rite have the individual option of the celibate or the married state while retaining their active ministry . . ."

The remark of a young priest from Detroit, made at the conclusion of the seminar, seemed to speak for many: "I came to explore and strengthen my appreciation of celibacy. Now it is toward marriage that I must begin to look. For me, celibacy is finished." One is tempted to say of this debate what is being said by many of the birth control controversy, "It *was* an interesting problem."

JOHN GROUTT

(Father John Groutt is a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.)

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Pre-Fab Housing and the Church in Detroit

Detroit

In an imaginative and unprecedented approach to housing for the poor, the Archdiocese of Detroit is providing land and overseeing the building of 1,133 low-income dwellings planned for Detroit and Western Wayne County. Phoenix Homes, the project is labeled—after the mythical bird that rose from the ashes. The project is being launched with the help of a $203,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, $80,000 of which is earmarked for construction and $123,000 for consultant, architectural and study fees. It is considered a revolutionary inner city program.

The Archdiocese of Detroit initially indicated a willingness to supervise the building of 500 housing units, if 17 experimental dwellings scattered over Detroit's East Side, among ancient and sometimes decrepit buildings, proved successful. Now Detroit's Archbishop John F. Dearden is prepared to go much farther. He has tentatively made available 93 acres of archdiocesan property for 1,116 low income units—if, again, the pilot 17 units meet the test. Most of the 17 are already subscribed for.

The archdiocese will seek to sell the 93 acres of its land to interested church and civic groups "below market value" (at cost, plus taxes), with the understanding that the groups will build the low income pre-fab units. Former director of community affairs department for the archdiocese, Edward J. Robinson, said there is a possibility that a Dearborn United Presbyterian church, the United Auto Workers, the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, and four Catholic parishes will purchase some of the land and follow through with the housing.

Robinson, who stepped out of his job to head a new Metropolitan Detroit Community Development Authority, said he had oral assent from the archbishop to borrow up to $10 million to build on the 93 acres if nobody else buys the land. Robinson, 33 and a former Michigan state senator (Democrat), figures the initial 17 units will cost the archdiocese thousands of dollars of its own money, but the funds borrowed for building on the 93 acres can be replaced once the units are sold. He envisions the dwellings ranging from one bedroom units for the aged to two and three bedroom family units. The family units would cost around $7,800 including land, and be available to the poor for $55 to $65 a month payments. The dwellings—houses, townhouses and apartments—will be ultra-modern in design. The University of Detroit plans a follow-up study of residents' opinions of the new homes.

The building of the 17 experimental dwellings is being administered by a 10-member interfaith committee named by the Positive Neighborhood Action Committee (PNAC), a composite of 59 inner city block clubs and agencies. The committee includes residents of the areas in which the units will be built, a young Lutheran (Missouri Synod) pastor of a storefront mission, a state senator, and one Roman Catholic—Robinson.

Plans call for the homes to be built of mass-produced, pre-fabricated wall panels mounted on pre-cast concrete columns and beams, which would allow future expansion easily to as many as four stories. Production costs will be as much as 40 percent below normal costs.

Robinson revealed that if the 1,116 units are built, and there is a demand for more housing, the archdiocese has plans to open a factory to build "some of the components." It would employ predominantly Negro help. He said the archdiocese is prepared to offer a two-story East Side building for the factory. "If we get into this phase of the 1,116 units," he said, "it will be a big investment, and we will want to make sure that we will involve some Negro capital." He said the factory, administered by a neighborhood-centered Detroit Development Corporation, would require a $100,000 investment.

So far the plans for the pre-fab housing in the Detroit area, where pre-fab construction has all but been driven out by trade unions (one commercial effort in suburban Oak Park to introduce pre-fab housing was forced to close up after only 15 or 20 units), have not stirred up any concerted opposition. But one labor representative, who declined to be quoted, warned "there is definite resistance in metropolitan Detroit and Wayne county to any pre-fab housing. It will be no pushover." He said the only pre-fab construction allowed now are pre-cut beams and cabinets.

Robinson has met with Jack Wood, head of the Detroit Building Trade Council. Wood says he is prepared to go along with Robinson's assertion that although "the amount of work on individual units might be reduced, the total amount of work will be more." Wood, however, is cautious. "We have not worked out details," he comments. "We agreed to cooperate and do the best we can. We're not apprehensive; beyond that, I can't say any more."

Stan Arnold, secretary-treasurer of the Michigan State Building and Construction Trade Council, in Lansing, said his group had no objection to pre-fab housing "if it doesn't cut our people out of work. Our position is that we do not stand in the way of progress." Robinson counters that 215,000 new housing units are needed in the greater Detroit area, with 18,000 of them needed in the inner city, a fact which he feels should be a sufficient guarantee of work, if the pre-fab idea catches on.

The controversial, Alinsky-inspired West Central Organization is going along with the project. In housing crusades in the past, WCO has carried a skunk to the city-county building to protest urban "removal" policies and spawned a series of arrests last fall when its mem-

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bers, many of them clergy, sought to reopen a house, deemed still adequate for occupancy, after it had been closed to await demolition. WCO believes the archdiocesan project is the right kind of answer to the housing shortage in the city.

"From what I see, it looks real good," said Renny Freeman, 33, former community organizer from Chicago who has taken over the helm as director of the WCO. "If they go on to build more beyond the 17, it's the greatest thing that's happened."

The Rev. David Eberhard, whose Eastside parish includes a clinic and storefront outlets, said "any new construction for the poor is a positive step," but warned against creating new ghettos in the mass building of units. He liked the general "scattered" placing of the 17 units in the first phase of the Phoenix Homes program.

Robinson was asked about the danger of creating new ghettos as the plan expands. He feels that the interracial units, some of which will be placed in all-white suburbs in the various plots of the 93 acres the archdiocese is making available, will encourage integration. But, he conceded the placing of the pre-fab units on sizable plots might pose a potential ghetto problem. "We run that risk," he said. He felt, however, that "the resources of society" in civic and church agencies would be sufficient to help solve employment, education and other problems. "If we can integrate economically, we can integrate racially," he said.

Archbishop Dearden, in announcing the pilot project last April, said the "cooperation of many—of those living in the project area, of the federal and city government, of private industry, of labor and of others—has made this demonstration possible." But he added that "continued co-operation, and particularly the active participation of the good people whose neighborhood should become a better place in which to live, will be needed to see it through."

Senator Philip Hart (D., Mich.) praised the archbishop's ability "to cut red tape faster than I've ever seen it done." And Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanagh has pegged the pilot project "a remarkable opportunity to help find a solution to one of the most pressing needs of all cities—more and better housing priced within the reach of almost everyone."

Newly assigned project director of Phoenix Homes for the archdiocese is Jeffrey Teamor, 45, a Negro and member of a Detroit Unity church (Lee's Summit, Mo., group). He is a former director of urban renewal for Royal Oak Township and former assistant director of urban renewal for Pontiac. He noted that the pilot homes are to be ready by November but said he could not comment on possible expansion of the project until an evaluation is made.

In the wake of the Detroit riots, Neal Mitchell, of Cambridge, Mass., Phoenix Homes developer, was called to Detroit to meet with the Mayor's Development Team, a newly created task force. Mitchell, reached in Cambridge, said his presence before the Detroit committee was "merely a progress report." But obviously there was a heightened interest in Phoenix Homes because of housing problems left behind by the riots. John P. Kanters, assistant to Dick Strichartz, coordinator of the Mayor's Development Team, said: "We are very definitely interested in this project (Phoenix Homes), but no specific riot area locations have been designated" for their placement. Kanters views the project as a long-term program for the whole inner city, with special emphasis on new housing for the aged.

HILEY H. WARD

(Hiley Ward is on the editorial staff of the Detroit Free Press.*)*

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

REVOLUTION OR SLAVE DESPAIR?

Looking back upon this summer and trying to figure out what, if anything, we have learned from the riots, I feel rather like Charles Dickens when he wrote the opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities*. This may not be the best of times or the worst of times, but every event of the summer and every theory about those events seems to have both a good and a bad aspect. Integration versus "black power," violence vs. non-violence, and Negro progress vs. Negro defeat are all susceptible of dual interpretations.

Was the violence only the latest crest of a wave of Negro revolution that has been moving for a dozen years? Or was it an outburst of "slave despair"? Did the violence and the "hate whitey" slogans damage the cause of integration? Or did they wake up white society as to how much farther the nation has to travel toward equality? Is "black power" a viable concept for Negro progress? Or is it merely the psychological expression of impotence?

A case can be made that, despite the useless destruction of property and the lost lives, the violence is a sign of movement and of growing self-confidence on the part of Negroes. It shows that Negroes are no longer afraid of white police, white landlords, white businessmen, and all the rest of the white world. No man can be liberated by others; every man has to emancipate himself. Perhaps the Negro is finally stretching toward his full manhood in America.

White immigrants from Europe who suffered no worse

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indignities than the Negro newcomers to cities today were far less patient in bearing their misfortunes. The Irish rioted in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore in the 1840's and '50's, and in 1863 the Irish-dominated draft riots tore New York City apart for three days running. The Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe had not been in this country 20 years before they were organizing unions in the garment industry and staging monster protest demonstrations against the sweatshops and other iniquities. Passivity has never been prized as an American virtue.

But although we can see some psychological uses for violence, it would be misleading and dangerous to romanticize violence. The highly-civilized editors of *The New York Review of Books* published on their cover in August a diagram for the making of a Molotov cocktail; this was, as they say in the television industry, a "grabber." But aside from grabbing hold of the reader's attention, it did not speak very well for the editors' commitment to liberal, humane values. That review also carried articles deriding the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as no longer "with it" among real, swinging Negroes and reporting on the Newark riot in apocalyptic terms as if it were the opening engagement of a proletarian revolution.

Even the therapeutic value of violence is arguable since it provides at best only a temporary release, but psychology aside, violence is morally indiscriminate and politically self-destructive. A society that is 90 percent white is not going to allow its cities to be wrecked by guerrilla warfare and its streets terrorized by Negro commandos. Violence is much more likely to evoke counter-violence and severe repression than it is to produce constructive programs. As if offering a self-fulfilling prophecy, "black power" militants at the Conference for New Politics in Chicago and elsewhere have begun adverting to "genocide" and "concentration camps." Such horrors are not likely to materialize, but it is possible that a whole generation of Negro youths now entering manhood could be brutalized by their futile resort to violence.

Does non-violence still have a future as a tactic for Negroes in the United States? Non-violence and loving thine enemy, in the view of some psychiatrists, is sound Christianity but poor psychology. It leads, they argue, to bottling up rage and aggression that ought to find natural outlets. But for a minority lacking economic and political power, it is a useful tactic. Moral leverage is a much safer technique than violence and much more likely, though not certain, to produce results. It worked dramatically in the South from the student sit-in's in 1960 to the Selma-to-Montgomery march in 1965 because it dramatized for the whole nation the savagery of Southern white power, symbolized by cattle prods and police dogs. Non-violence has not worked so well in the North because the antagonists—the slum landlords, the paper-shuffling school superintendents, the lily white trade unionists—are less easy to dramatize. Another difficulty, paradoxically, is that in the North the Negroes have some economic and, particularly, some political leverage. But the presence of Negro councilmen and congressmen serves to diffuse responsibility and blunt issues rather than make progress easier.

Non-violence continues to commend itself to the great majority of Negroes and to their established organizations such as the NAACP and Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Like other Americans, they rely upon their own individual efforts, on peaceful persuasion, and on politics to advance their interests. But, of course they are not the restless young people who start riots or quickly join them. How to reach these rebels who regard everybody but themselves as "Uncle Toms" is, so far, an unanswered question. Simply giving in to them and accepting their slogans and their programs is no answer as the white radicals who attended the New Politics Conference discovered. It does not help any Negro to scramble the problems of Vietnam and Venezuela or to link Lyndon Johnson with George Lincoln Rockwell. Along with a lot of racist posturing and chauvinism, there is also an ugly strain of anti-Semitism among the black militants which has begun to surface.

Successful capitalist societies traditionally dispose of revolutionary agitation by buying off the agitators. If enough duchesses invite Ramsay MacDonald to dinner, he soon ceases to be a very effective Labor prime minister. If trade union leaders serve on enough civic committees, they soon begin sounding as ponderous as Chamber of Commerce executives. Better jobs, more scholarships, old age pensions, these are means that rich societies use to damp down discontent and buy internal peace.

Sensible economists are already at their desks working out the calculations to dispose of Negro unrest by economic means. When a society is as rich as the United States, generating $700 billions worth of goods and services every year, it is ridiculous to have poor people, whatever their color, rioting in the streets. The wise investment of a trifling two or three percent of the gross national product in public works, family allowances, different kinds of schools, and youth programs would dull the discontent. No investment, however, would bring about the ideal racial integration, the renewed sense of neighborliness, and the human fulfillment that Christians and secular dreamers alike seek but which is beyond government's powers to attain.

The summer is over. The study commissions have been appointed. Congress remains conservative, and the Administration remains war-preoccupied. Neither the shouts of the rioters nor the empirical reasonings of the economists find an answering echo. The nation, leaderless, torpid, and distracted, shrinks nervously back within itself. The National Guard improves its riot-control training, and Ronald Reagan makes political headway.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

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BOY-MAN SCHLEMIEL: JEWISH HUMOR

'If you live in New York, you're Jewish'

ALBERT GOLDMAN

To me, if you live in New York or any other big city, you are Jewish. It doesn't matter even if you're Catholic; if you live in New York you're Jewish. If you live in Butte, Montana, you're going to be goyish even if you're Jewish. Evaporated milk is goyish even if the Jews invented it. Spam is goyish and rye bread is Jewish. Negroes are all Jews. Italians are all Jews. Irishmen who have rejected their religion are Jews. LENNY BRUCE

Modern American Jewish humor has a special ironic, ambivalent—both contemptuous and nostalgic—tone which is intimately associated with the confusing dilemma of assimilation. First heard in Central Europe, in the places where the Jew was first "emancipated," this special tone colored the Berlin cabaret performances of the '20s, the theatrical collaborations of Brecht and Weill, and the jibes of Bemelmans, Perelman and others condemned by Goebbels in 1938 as a "Jewish infected minority" and denounced for "jokes that cease to be jokes when they touch the holiest matters of national life."

In the search for the source of this modern humor, one can go even farther back: to the first great writer of the Jewish "Emancipation." The prototype of the ambivalent Jew using a comedy lens for self-scrutiny is Heinrich Heine. From a young age Heine was uncomfortably aware of himself as an outsider, as a Jew among Christians. His early poetry described the melancholy pain of unfulfilled love: it was a poetry of rejection. He tends, however, to mock his own emotions, to gaze like a cynical observer at his own pain. Because of this inclination, Heine has been aptly described as "the poet of divided and self-alienated consciousness par excellence." Of himself, he once stated significantly, "I cannot relate my own griefs without the thing becoming comic." The Jewish element in Heine's wit rests on his sense of caricature, his fusion of sentiment with irony, and above all his penchant for self-satire. Along with his love of life, he communicates a profound feeling of alienation from the world; a feeling shared by all assimilated or partly assimilated Jews whose position in society is inevitably ambiguous.

Although the American Jew is now more comfortable than in any other country at any time, he nevertheless, like Heine, resists total assimilation just as firmly as he resists orthodox Judaism. His conflict is one of alienation and identity; and his attempt to conform produces discomfort and confusion. He is neither a proud alien (which the Gentiles would like), nor a devout Jew (which the Jews would like), nor, certainly, truly indistinguishable from the others (which he himself would like). Since he cannot totally surrender his identity, he views life from an isolated position—his head cocked ironically awry, his eyes and mind always alert to control his environment by total intellectual awareness, and his tongue poised to mock both himself and others, Jews and Gentiles alike. For the Jew a highly developed verbal wit serves as both shield and salvation.

The Comic Boy-Man

The power, richness, and complexity of Jewish humor in America builds on three distinct levels, each of which generates disillusionment, anger and conflict. The three levels are family, social and cultural. The three conflicts are: the child vs. his parents; lower middle-class Jewish

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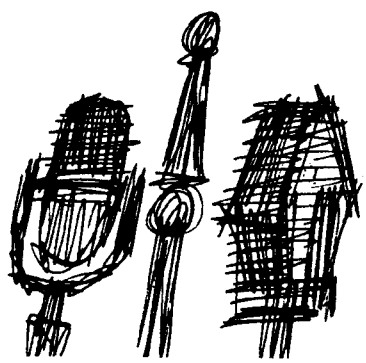
society vs. upper middle-class Gentile society; and the glamorized images of the mass media vs. the harsh everyday realities, i.e., fantasy vs. reality.

The family relationship is particularly crucial because it establishes the basic psycho-dynamics of Jewish humor. The Jewish comic never completely severs his childhood connections with, and antagonisms toward, his family, particularly his mother. Even when grown, he remains a boy-man. His extreme alienation stems from several factors common to Jewish family life: (1) the breakdown of traditional order and strong values, resulting in extreme permissiveness; (2) the pattern of the parents' secret ulterior manipulation of children (demonstrative love veiling strong demands) which causes such confused resentment within the child that he often totally rejects his family; (3) the pressure for success "no matter what you do," exerted by parents whose permissiveness has robbed their children of the habits of discipline, concentration and endurance required for achievement; and (4) perhaps most important, the Jewish mother's destructive domination, her demands for love and success from her son which are linked to her refusal to grant him the independence required for manhood.

Philip Roth depicts the antagonism between Jewish generations in a subtle but deadly style, particularly in *Letting Go* where Jewish types are "put on" to the hilt—portrayed as shallow, vulgar, pretentious, smug, domineering, self-pitying, fatuous and affected. And yet with Roth, as often also with the less refined writers, there is an attitude of tenderness coexisting with one of rage. Similarly, Bruce Jay Friedman in *A Mother's Kisses* presents a biting and yet warm portrait of the struggle between a son and his mother. He has captured both the flamboyant, commanding mother with her embarrassing pushiness and lack of self-restraint, and the inhibited, troubled adolescent dragged through life on mama's apron strings.

From these third-generation conflicts within Jewish family life and from this world which Roth and Friedman illuminate comes the boy-man, the Jewish comic (writer, performer, cartoonist, etc.), who is in turn the major force in modern American humor. (Typically, he has a juvenile-sounding name: "Woody" Allen, "Jerry" Lewis, "Soupy" Sales, "Lenny" Bruce, "Sandy" Baron, etc.) This Jewish comic is the adolescent urban funny boy, hysterically intense. The key to his comedy—and the ironic clue to his tragedy—is that he is intellectually and verbally overdeveloped at the same time that he is emotionally and sexually under-developed. Although on one level he is sharp and sophisticated, on another level he is merely childish and petulant. This Jewish comic, the boy-man, often comes from Brooklyn or the Bronx, the urban perimeter of New York. He lives in the street, on corners, in candy stores and "luncheonettes" and at the movies. He is nervous, restless and loud, always talking, laughing or screaming.

My own experience with this Jewish hipster is intensely personal. For seven years I lived, like the characters in *A Mother's Kisses,* in "three rooms in Bensonhurst." I learned that Bensonhurst and similar neighborhoods in Brooklyn and the Bronx have produced as many Jewish comedians as Vienna Jewish analysts or Odessa Jewish fiddlers. My introduction to this frenetic comic world grew out of a casual meeting with one of my students at Brooklyn College and a conversation about jazz. Eventually this student introduced me to his circle of friends, young people in their mid-20s who had always lived in the lower middle-class neighborhoods of Brooklyn. They were an odd lot: some were in a shady home-repair business; some in television; some went to school; some did nothing. Having known each other and shared their lives since adolescence, they enjoyed above all getting together and talking—in a "show biz", not a conversational, way. They had developed an indigenous humor, wild and fantastic, collectively inspired but individually performed. Gradually the group fell into the habit of gathering in my living room every Saturday night, with everyone having his turn on-stage. The atmosphere was that of a jam session. The group's excitement released each performer, sending his fancies flying sky-high. The form for the evening was simple: generally a review of the week's events, which would cue the performer into past experiences, social observations, and then on to any and every sort of material—all produced purely spontaneously. This impromptu volleying of funny fantasies was called the *Spritz.*



I remember the excitement, the abandon of this scene, what it felt like to be caught up in this frenzy, and especially what it felt like to generate and to control it. It gave you a tremendous sense of power to see people in front of you doubled over with the pain of laughter. Then you would work twice as hard to drive them over the edge into total hysteria. Sadistic? Absolutely. And the "bits" were wild and obscene. Sex experiences topped the list; they were treated with all possible invention, elaboration, exaggeration and surrealistic fantasy. The "What if" bits were also popular, spun off with stabbing force of black humor. "What if the pilots in the big airlines were really juiced out of their skulls and had to ditch their plane and passengers?" "What if the junkies were to take over the U.N.?" This kind of fantasy was not merely

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satirical, not merely incongruous in the usual manner of humor. It was desecratory. In doing such bits myself I found that at some moments you flew out of yourself, becoming purely a channel for inspiration; there was an almost total loss of self-consciousness and of awareness of the present moment. In the personal narrative of past experience you used yourself ruthlessly, exulting in the exposure of the weaknesses and deficiencies of an earlier self. Using the former self as the butt of the present self meant indulging in an orgy of triumphant self-hatred, an exorcism of the loathed self-image.

One thing that emerged clearly from the spontaneous comic brilliance of these ritual staging sessions was the fact that anger stimulated and inspired all of us. There was just enough Jewish identity left in these young people's fairly well-assimilated families to make an issue of it, an issue which stirred them deeply; they felt contaminated by their parents. Their satire was born in the rejection of their immediately surrounding world, in the desecration of first the family, then the neighborhood, and finally the whole milieu in which they had grown up. Instead of swallowing or disguising their emotions, these young Jews, consumed with self-hate or shame, came out in the open and blasted the things that hurt them.

Basic to the mentality of these Brooklyn comics was this: they had polarized to a grotesque degree the values of intelligence, good breeding and culture, on the one hand; and their own condition as crude, wild, Jewish outcasts and pariahs, on the other. Even in later life their tenacity in holding to these opposing images was absolutely incredible. No amount of experience, persuasion or love could efface these convictions; they were primary images imprinted indelibly on their souls and, curiously, retained as much by a fondness for them as by an incapacity to shed them. For if they were vulgar and uneducated, yet they were "smaht." If they lacked culture, yet they had fun. The balance physically was such that they were as much in love with their imperfections as they were enraged by them. What they needed, and found, was a medium in which to register this confused and complex self-awareness. That this had to be comedy followed from the fact that they couldn't express their emotions with perfect seriousness. Like the hypochondriac who fears he is dying of a fatal disease, they knew they were not really as badly off as they liked to imagine; that, in fact, their sense of inferiority was an exaggerated conceit. Comedy therefore provided the license and the medium for the extreme exaggeration of reality that corresponded with the intensity of their feelings.

These Brooklyn bright boys that I knew were a particular group, but they were not unique. Their obsessions and their inspirations are typical of the Jewish comic, the boy-man, who is exerting such a powerful influence on American humor today. And this humor cannot be understood without digging to its core, to its family roots: to the pain, the humiliation, the anger and the alienation imprinted early on the boy who eventually finds release in comic raving, ranting and raging.

Refuge and Rationalization

Having derived its first surge of anger and conflict from the family, Jewish humor builds next on the social setting: the problems of assimilation—of survival—for the Jew in a Gentile world. Recognizing himself as an outsider, an alien among Gentiles, the Jew regards his position with characteristic ambivalence: both pride and contempt. Traditionally the Jews think of themselves as clever and knowing, scorning the *goyim* as dumb and slow-witted. In complete contrast, however, the Jews also traditionally identify weakness, suffering and disaster with themselves; in turn, they attribute health, physical strength and normality to the Gentiles. In order to deal with this confusing mixture of pride and contempt, the Jew has classically adopted the figure of the *schlemiel* as a symbol of his predicament.

Using the theme of the *schlemiel* is standard not only for the nightclub comic's routine (beginning with his ridiculing himself), but also for the comic novels written by authors such as Wallace Markfield, Bruce Jay Friedman, and even the more serious Saul Bellow. The classic *schlemiel* is the "I" dramatized as inept, inadequate, foolish, exploited or self-deceiving in a situation that elicits the audience's sympathy or tears. Today's entertainers, however, have transformed the basic pattern; they have so distorted the *schlemiel's* dilemma by comic imagination that he becomes terribly funny rather than sad. The psychological dynamics underlying the pose of the *schlemiel* help explain its duration and popularity: it is safer to attack ourself or to laugh at ourself before others do, because in this way we gain the offensive. By controlling the re-enactment of our inadequacy imaginatively and cleverly, we also have the psychological satisfaction of enlisting sympathetic laughter. As Freud has shown, people side with us when they laugh at something with us; and this solidarity exists even when we encourage them to laugh with us *at us*. The *schlemiel's* power rests on his daring to lay bare his own weakness and to acknowledge his own limitations. Although he may appear pathetic or absurd, the *schlemiel* conceals behind his mask a hidden strength: a shrewd sense of self-preservation.

The two cornerstones of Jewish humor, family and social, are united finally by a third building block: the cultural. Of the many factors responsible for creating the problems of this generation we have been discussing, the one most relevant to comedy has been the incalculably persuasive influence of the mass media on emotional development. Growing up in the '30s and '40s, the American child was fed on late afternoon radio serials (usually stressing virility); in the evening he sprawled on the floor to read comics; and on Saturdays he sat in the charged

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darkness of the movies, entranced by seductive images and situations. This generation, the first to have been so totally conditioned to desire and to expect a world of make-believe, was frozen into a state of imaginative and emotional retardation. Since reality could not possibly rival the glamorous illusions so deeply implanted by films, radio and newspapers, they found in comparison that their lives seemed excruciatingly drab.

The movies not only whetted the sexual appetite beyond any hope of fulfillment, they also promoted notions of masculinity and femininity that were impossible to live up to: gauze-clad harem beauties, supremely masculine men, and scenes of dissolving sexual ecstasy—enticing but unattainable images. This kind of mass-cultural conditioning produced a generation seething with sexual expectations that are not only highly unrealistic, but that are also constantly being checked by America's lingering Puritanism. Suffering from a sense of inferiority in comparison to the magnetic movie idols, and madly determined to preserve their youth and vitality, this generation is fundamentally disillusioned and angry at the farcically immense gap between the illusions they have been spoonfed and the realities they inevitably find paltry. Ironically, the degree of disillusionment with adult life in America is more intense than elsewhere, not only because there has been an extreme exposure to illusion, but also because the chances of fulfilling wild fantasies *are* in fact more real here. When it is impossible to relinquish a fantasy and equally impossible to fulfill it, the stalemate is extraordinarily painful. Here, comedy provides one kind of solution: to reactivate the fantasy, to act it out while simultaneously making fun of it; to turn it inside out in order to attack and enjoy it all over again at the same time.

The satisfaction and release obtained by reactivating those fantasies which have in reality been very frustrating explains why the favorite subjects of modern comedy are: the standard movie formulas of the '30s and '40s, characters from the comics and adventure radio programs, and the common symbols for American ideals. Furthermore, because these images evoke a combination of hatred and nostalgia they serve as triggers for comic indignation.

The reactions of the current generation of Americans to the disillusionment brought on by the conflict between reality and the fantasies of the mass media are too complex to be contained within any formula; already they have found outlets in Pop Art, Camp and other styles that have no Jewish affinities. This disillusionment, however, has fused with the feelings of disenchantment, anger and ambivalence that are the stuff of Jewish humor; and this fusion explains not only many of the symbols of this humor, but also the source of its appeal generally.

The overwhelming impact of the Jew on American humor today has meaning that is not suggested by the surface ripples made by Jewish fun books and the fad of Yiddish phrases. Jewishness itself has become a metaphor for modern life. The individual Jew—the alien in search of identity—has become a symbolic protagonist. As he dares more and more to expose his inner turmoil to self-satire, the Jew is discovering in turn that Americans are more and more receptive to his comic consciousness: to ironic mockery of personal plights, to bitter-sweet retreats from painful realities, and to angry thrusts at broken dreams. The Jew having become a symbolic representative for our time, his humor—his great cultural weapon and consolation—can now be appreciated in its raw form by millions of people who have no connection with the Jewish community and who are not even aware that what they are laughing at is Jewish humor.

Fiasco in Chicago

ALICE IN NEWLEFTLAND

PETER STEINFELS

A certain fantasy quality would attend any New Left gathering held in Chicago's Palmer House; but, still, no one quite expected the National Convention on New Politics to turn into a Lewis Carroll production of Marat/Sade. The expectations were indicated by the press corps: the New York *Times,* the Washington *Post,* and the London *Observer;* Dwight Macdonald for *Esquire,* Andrew Kopkind for the *New York Review of Books,* James Ridgeway for the *New Republic.* Tass had two men on the job, and a friend of mine rode down an elevator with someone from the Bulgarian news agency. Impressive but dangerous. Even writing about the New Politics Convention can be misleading. The sequences of sentences and the blocks of paragraphs lend the business a sense of order and substance it never possessed. When all the words are filed, will we convince ourselves that something significant happened in Chicago?

Maybe something significant did happen, but certainly not what was hoped for, which was a channeling of the

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energies of all those groups which can only be termed the American opposition. Black power advocates, white radicals of S.D.S. ilk, middle-class humanitarian liberals, they apparently agreed on two points: first, that Vietnam and racial conflict are not merely "mistakes" of an otherwise sound America but symptomatic of a radically unhealthy society; second, that any attack on the nation's ills which wanted to be both radical and politically successful must be multi-issue and comprehensive, rather than restricted to a single issue like the war or civil rights. The open question was how to transform such convictions into genuine social change.

Some new politickers, along with Communists and others nostalgic for '48, were advocates of a third party which could run an anti-war, left-wing presidential ticket in '68. Some were advocates of "local organizing"—the formation of a network of community groups which would start with concrete local demands and only gradually move to a radical critique of America. These "organizers," generally veterans of Students for a Democratic Society or its spin-off projects, heatedly opposed any third party as likely to be top-heavy, publicity conscious, and given to compromise; a one-shot affair which would divert money and personnel from the more difficult but more lasting work of grass roots organizing.

Somewhere between these groups were the advocates of third-ticket electoral activity, based not on a national party, but on local radical political groups; a third presidential ticket, from their point of view, might be coordinated nationally, or different tickets might be presented in the states where they could make a respectable showing. In any case, electoral activity was to be an instrument of developing a permanent radical constituency; it should not extend itself prematurely, trading sound organization for a few extra votes in '68.

These were the alternatives the convention met to discuss, but in place of discussion we witnessed a Japanese sumo match: grunts and shoves lubricated with ritual gestures. Revealing a certain political dullness, the convention's organizers were unprepared for the black power demands of the Negro delegates; and before the convention proper had even opened, a group of black nationalists struck up their own separate but equal New Politics conference in a South Side church. The remaining members of the Black Caucus decided not to secede but fight, and this, at least, was one of the few concrete, understandable decisions—backed by the employment of the necessary means—that any group in Chicago made.

By the third day of the meeting, the threat of a black walkout had brought the steering committee to cancel all scheduled workshops for an emergency general plenary session. On the floor was a 13-point Black Caucus manifesto, a take-it-or-leave-it proposition, no changes please, and if you haven't agreed by noon, we're walking out. Some of the 13 points were innocuous ("Support the concepts of self-determination for black people") or purely rhetorical ("Call upon all 'so-called' freedom loving white people . . . to unshackle their minds from old conceptual structures. . . ."). Some were straightforward politicking (support for Adam Clayton Powell and the Conyers bill). Point 1 demanded 50 percent Negro representation on all convention committees, a proposal which was debatable but, given the nature of the committees, certainly not unthinkable.

But Point 4 asked "total and unquestionable support" for all wars of national liberation. Point 5 condemned " the imperialistic Zionist war." Point 11 proposed "white civilizing committees . . . to civilize and humanize the savage and beast-like character that runs rampant throughout America, as exemplified by George Lincoln Rockwells and Lyndon Baines Johnsons." And Point 12 demanded support for *all* resolutions passed by the Newark Black Power Conference.

What happened next was surely one of the more blatant acts of dishonesty to make a claim as "new politics." If few of the white delegates believed Israel's war was imperialistic, if few of them could remember half the Newark black power resolutions, even fewer were willing to state their opposition openly on the floor. Instead, the debate, if that term can be applied loosely, centered on metaphysical matters like "gestures," "acts of faith," and genuine trust in our black brothers." The white minds were duly unshackled, unquestionable support was given; the resolution passed 3 votes to 1.

Liberals and Radicals

The strongest opposition to the document came from the white radicals who had been engaged in serious organizing; the support, as the size of the votes indicated, came from "guilty liberals." One half-substantiated rumor had it that the Black Caucus had never expected its proposals to pass; they were indeed tests, not of white trust and sincerity, but of whether the New Politics were going to be "liberal" or truly radical. If the convention passed the measures—so the rumor went—the answer was liberal. Arthur Waskow was blunter still: "There are a thousand liberals at this convention who want to become radicals—and they think the way to do it is self-castration."

Waskow's observation was worth repeating, and repeat it he did the next day when the Black Caucus decided that control of half the convention's votes was the logical outcome of the previous day's resolution, as indeed it probably was. Having enjoyed the benefit of a session where James Foreman took over the chair and the Black Caucus ramrodded through a series of resolutions, the convention enthusiastically agreed to hand over half its voting power. Some of the white delegations had already folded their tents, however, and the new voting arrangements actually gave 28,000 votes (to be cast as

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a unit) to the Black Caucus and 23,000 votes for everyone else. "What's the point of debate in a situation like this?" asked some innocent from the floor, his mind still not unshackled from old conceptual structures.

"A victory for Stalinism!" was the comment of some older radicals, and whispers about a C.P. takeover skittered here and there. They were mistaken. The Black Caucus itself was internally divided; its meetings combined order, dissent and chaos in much the same proportions as the other caucuses. The decisions the Black Caucus made with its 28,000 votes were relatively good ones. It blessed the marriage of the "organizers" and the third-ticket advocates, which had been arranged the day before. The New Politics would devote half its resources to local organizing and half to opposition electioneering. Unfortunately, the condemnation of Israel probably meant that these resources would be virtually non-existent; everyone was squabbling over a nearly dead horse. But the Black Caucus's actions were incompatible with anything which might be called a New Politics in a much more important sense. The ultimatum style, the inclusion of propositions many delegates could not sincerely hold, and the effective abandonment of genuine debate and democratic voting undercut a central plank of the radical platform: that the process of reaching political decisions is inevitably a major part of their content.

Although the Black Caucus presented the convention with its most important challenge, this was not a take-over but a give-away. That, perhaps, was the convention's unexpected significance: the white Leftists showed themselves politically incompetent and, in all too many cases, spiritually flabby. The original organizers of the convention mainly seemed to keep out of sight. The liberals, taken by surprise by the Negro militancy, were caught between good intentions and their occupational guilt. The DuBois Clubbers did their best to ingratiate themselves with the Black Caucus. Only a few of the so-called white radicals had enough determination even to make their plight seem sad. They at least had sloughed off some of the romanticisms the liberals still clung to. They knew, for example, that the days of blacks and whites singing freedom songs together had passed, and that the old unity couldn't be re-established by dishonest resolutions. They were set on organizing whites, but behind this intention I sensed a great vagueness as to who these whites were and how they could be effectively organized. None of these groups distinguished themselves in the general discussions. Rallying cries substituted for substantive debate, and the well-turned denunciation, no matter how empty, was always assured of a ringing applause.

The New Politics Convention was dismaying but not tragic: it was not a noble effort, it was not crushed by the pressures of the day. Being ultimately neither new nor politics, the convention simply collapsed of its own lack of weight.

POTPOURRI

THE SCREEN

One trouble with American cineastes is that they are likely to think that all films made abroad are God's gift to us critters smothered in Hollywood pap. Imported movies frequently do have something interesting to say and frequently say it well, but only the better ones reach our shores, and even some of them are not exactly world beaters. Furthermore, now that movie-making has become so international, it's hard to put national labels on films. In any case, here are a few notes on pictures made abroad which turned up during the summer and, as far as I'm concerned, cineastes who are crazy about them are wrong.

"The Thief of Paris," Louis Malle's extraordinarily handsome movie with lovely turn-of-the-century costumes and sets, tells how the thief got started, pursued his career by behaving no worse than anyone else in this hypocritical world, and became so skillful and obsessed in his work that he couldn't stop. Malle has a point, and his cast led by Jean-Paul Belmondo is fine; but this very French film is so steeped in cynicism and so undramatic that it gets to be a bore, in spite of attractive acting and sets, long before its two-hour running time finally comes to its who-cares finale.

"Woman Times Seven," also made in Paris, is an international hodgepodge presented by Joseph E. Levine, directed by Vittorio De Sica, and starring Shirley MacLaine assisted by Peter Sellers, Rossano Brazzi, Vittorio Gassman, Lex Barker, Patrick Wyman, Alan Arkin, Michael Caine, each of whom appears in one of the seven sketches which seem to be designed to make *the* woman look like a stupid fool or calculating bitch. Cesare Zavattini's short sketches (unrelated except for the Paris locales and Miss MacLaine's appearance in each) all have O. Henry endings that fall completely flat. It hardly seems possible that such a distinguished roster of names could add up to so little; but, alas, seven times zero is zero.

"The Birds, the Bees, and the Italians" is another of producer-director-writer Pietro Germi's serio-comedies about his fellow Italians—this time upper-middle-class city folk are the butt of his jokes, but the main themes, sex and hypocrisy, are the same. He tells three tales with pretty much the same characters, although with different leads in each. The tales are rather slight, dealing with adultery, adultery, and statutory rape; and the characters have little depth and behave like the people in those old-fashioned musical-comedy black-out skits. In his "Divorce —Italian Style," Germi showed up people for what they are, but he still treated them with understanding and

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some compassion. In "Birds, Bees," these meaner characters are just clowns and the victims of other clowns, all set up for the ironic quip.

"King of Hearts" is an anti-war comedy made by Philippe De Broca, and I suppose any anti-war film deserves attention and approval. But evidently anti-war comedies are not director De Broca's forte. After he won audiences with several wacky, naughty and lighthearted comedies like "The Love Game" and "The Five-Day Lover," De Broca attracted an even larger following with a hilarious adventure movie, "That Man from Rio." Perhaps that's why I felt even more disappointed with "King of Hearts," in which a Scots soldier is sent to a French village during World War I to defuse a bomb planted by the Germans. Since the townsfolk have run in terror, the village has been taken over by the inmates of the local lunatic asylum, and our soldier (Alan Bates) thinks these crazy folk are the citizens. This might be a cute situation, but De Broca does nothing interesting with it. Most of the soldiers in the film are caricatures and pretty awful. And the lunatics running through the town are just plain crazy. Bates is charmed by them, and winds up joining them. Why not—that's one way of escaping war! But as a movie this is flimsy stuff and has none of the bounce or thoughtful fun that De Broca used to put in his lyrical, well-paced movies.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

BOOKS

Theology—leftward, ho

The Meaning of the Death of God

EDIT. BERNARD MURCHLAND

Random House, $6.95

The New Dialogue Between Philosophy and Theology

JAMES A. MARTIN, JR.

Seabury Press, $5.95

The Roots of the Radical Theology

JOHN CHARLES COOPER

Westminster Press, $4.95

MARY DALY

These three books all have something to contribute toward better understanding of the death-of-God theology. Bernard Murchland's book is a collection of essays on the subject by Protestant, Jewish and Catholic scholars. The essays vary greatly in scope and quality. Most of them assess the movement negatively. Among the more interesting is that of John Warwick Montgomery, who refers to Vahanian as the mortician-littérateur of the movement, Cox as the mortician-sociologist, Altizer as the mortician-mystic, Hamilton as the mortician-theologian, and Van Buren as the mortician-philosopher. He sees roots of the movement in Kierkegaardian-Barthian theology, whose basic premise is that the Word of God cannot be identified with any human attempt to comprehend it. As a result of this premise, the believer moves in a "closed circle" of irrational commitment. The God of such an irrational faith had to die.

Eugene Borowitz, writing from a Jewish standpoint, admits that he does not see much for Judaism to learn from the movement. Emerson Shideler objects to the general failure of the death-of-God theologians to acknowledge the place of metaphysics. He shows that in the case of Van Buren, for example, there is certainly an implicit and unrecognized metaphysics. What is needed, therefore, is an adequate metaphysics. John Dunne maintains that the affirmation that God is dead gives birth to a new god, that is, death itself. One of the most valuable contributions is that of W. Richard Comstock, whose analysis seeks to place the movement in historical perspective.

Many will find James Martin's book particularly helpful as an introduction to the various trends in analytical philosophy and their relevance to recent theological developments. In answer to Tertullian's famous question, "What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem?" the author maintains that there is a great deal in common. Philosophy and theology cannot avoid coexistence, and dialogue between them is enriching to both. Dr. Martin demonstrates that British analytical philosophy has roots in the past, and shows the superficiality of believing that the problems which it poses were totally unrecognized before. As for theologians: the persistent demand that they clarify their statements has had fascinating results, but the author thinks that for the most part theological response has been inadequate.

The last chapter is particularly suggestive. Here Martin illustrates that there has recenly been a convergence of interest in metaphysics on the part of theologians and analytical philosophers alike. He believes this to be of crucial importance for the future of the new dialogue. "If traditional theology cannot evade dialogue with metaphysics, neither can the newly traditional 'secular theology,' or antitheology, whose imprecise slogans are 'God is dead' and 'metaphysics is outmoded.' " In fact, the whole study points to the conclusion that assessment of language and its use inevitably entails assessment of ontological and metaphysical issues and positions. In addition to this, there is the possibility that C. B. Daly is right in

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suggesting that "the contemporary human effort to restore metaphysics is essentially a struggle to prevent man from being depersonalized by the methods of impersonal investigation and anonymous verification he has devised for science."

Dr. Martin's analyses and evaluations of an impressive array of philosophers and theologians (including Bradley, Russell, Husserl, Wittgenstein, Flew, Wisdom, Blackstone, Ramsey, Braithwaithe, Hick, Van Buren, Cox) constitute a valuable contribution to the dialogue. There is a difficulty with the author's style, however. Frequently his discussion of the most fascinating issues come through as boring. His awareness of the necessity for clarity drives him to make excessive qualifications which blur the issue and distract the reader.

The third book, *The Roots of the Radical Theology,* by John Charles Cooper, is far more readable and more accessible to the non-specialist reader. The book is a study of the contrapuntal or negatively critical developments in Western philosophy and theology. Having demonstrated that the contrapuntal tradition goes back beyond Socrates, the book analyzes the stages in its development up to the rise of the radicals in recent years. The author maintains a positive attitude toward the negative tradition, noting that the critic of one era often becomes the foundation stone of the next, and that the heresy of one age has often proved to be the orthodoxy of another. In fact, "the criticism and negative assessments of any period of thought have often proved to be the genuine source of positive human progress."

It is Dr. Cooper's conviction that the great theological synthesizers (Hermann, Schweitzer, Bultmann, Tillich) made valiant attempts to replace the framework of the Christian faith which had been washed away, but that they have had their day. He points out that the rise of the radical theology with its declaration of the death of God demonstrates the failure either of the synthetic theologians or of the church which did not fully accept their great syntheses. The contention of the book is that the real failure lies in the idolatry and ignorance of the Christian church's leaders and theologians. "The elements for the reconstruction of Christianity in the twentieth century have been offered to the Church and they have been spurned." As a result, we have entered the era of the "death of God."

The author, who wrote his doctoral dissertation under Paul Tillich, is particularly interesting in his analysis of the "ambiguous relationship" of the radical theologians to Barth and of the "rather direct influence" of Tillich upon them. He asserts that Barth's greatest contribution to theology is his emphasis upon the disunity of the natural and the divine. "Barth's view is that God reveals himself to us in the Bible and holds that we cannot know God in any other way except through a response to that revelation." This position obviously poses grave problems for those who are alienated from the Bible—which is precisely the situation of the contemporary theologian, according to death-of-God theologian William Hamilton. The latter maintains, and rightly so, that Scriptural revelation has lost its power to influence men in our era. Thus: "Barth and the neoorthodoxy he helped to found is the real enemy Hamilton struggles against." Hamilton and Altizer are influenced by Barth to the extent that they have polarized themselves negatively on his theology.

The relationship to Tillich is entirely different. Altizer wrote: "It was Tillich alone who made possible a way to a truly contemporary theology. While I have been forced to resist and oppose Tillich's theological conclusions, I do so with the conviction that they are not yet radical enough, and with the memory of Tillich's words to me that the real Tillich is the radical Tillich." As Cooper points out, Tillich cannot be simplistically labeled as "conservative" or "radical," for he was a profound systematic thinker who defies simple analysis. However, he was unique among the systematizers in that he took this world seriously. Thus: "Altizer is correct in maintaining that it is Tillich alone who makes it possible for us to work toward a truly contemporary theology that will take into account the elements of modern secular, scientific, and technological culture." However, Cooper believes that the death-of-God movement is an extreme over-emphasis of one side of Tillich's thought. "This is legitimate use of one's sources, since Tillich is now part of the great Christian tradition, but it is also an indication of the one-sidedness of the radical theology."

Why have the young radicals moved so far to the left? Cooper points out that the generation that preceeded us passed through the experience of demythologizing the gospel, hoping to recover its inner meaning. However: "The problem of our present period is not only that we reject the literalism of religious mythology, which has been done by theologians for decades, but that many men today no longer believe in the meaning of the demythologized myths." In such a situation as ours, "only the most radical attempts to redefine and reestablish the sense of the sacred have any chance of success." Cooper does not see the radicals as having the last word, but they must not be ignored. In fact: "Any future theology must respond to the radicals as the bearers of the prophetic spirit of Protestantism."

There can be no doubt that Dr. Cooper writes as one who is accustomed to address undergraduates. There is an odd combination of naiveté of expression and shrewdness of judgment. The summary and eulogy of Teilhard de Chardin at the end of the book, for example, evokes an image of Teilhard as a theological superman zooming in to save us from the frightful mess which has been mapped out in the preceding 152 pages. But then again, why not?

Playboy Interviews

EDITORS OF PLAYBOY

Trident Press, $5.95

KATHLEEN A. McHALE

Those who read *Playboy* for the interviews will be pleased, presumably, to find that they can read this book and avoid whatever offends them about the magazine. The book contains, according to the editors, "an unprecedented series

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of air-clearing, enlightening, sometimes shocking, always bracing conversations" with "movers and shakers of our time." Not quite; the book is extremely uneven.

These interviews can be viewed as platforms, as personal revelations, as put-ons, and as politics. As platforms, they offer those interviewed an opportunity to discuss their activities in an informal atmosphere, to erase misconceptions which have clustered around their public images. The people interviewed here are the objects of enormous publicity and controversy, hence one welcomes the chance to observe them at close hand, away from the glare. It is thus disappointing to find subjects merely presenting their "position." Such interviews are lifeless; one can almost hear the tape recorder steadily whirring. An interviewer should be able to draw out his subject, so that what emerges is an individual style of thought and character, vivid images—a person. Ayn Rand, for example, delivers a synopsis of Objectivism in snappish, nasal tones (her remarks *read* nasally, somehow). At one point, the interviewer asks if hers were not a rather "black-and-white set of values." Replied the lady:

"It most certainly is. I most emphatically advocate a black-and-white view of the world. Let us define this . . . 'black-and-white' . . . means good and evil. Before you can identify anything as gray, as middle of the road, you have to know what is black and what is white, because gray is merely a mixture of the two. And when you have established that one alternative is good and the other is evil, there is no justification for the choice of a mixture. There is no justification ever for choosing any part of what you know to be evil."

Playboy: "Then do you believe in absolutes?"

Rand: "I do."

One learns something about the *level* of Miss Rand's mind (not to mention the interviewer's), but almost nothing about the kinds of intellectual and social experiences which have influenced her thought.

The interviews with Malcolm X and Robert Shelton are not only flat, they are dishonest and childish. The effect is macabre and unreal. In both cases, *Playboy's* interviewers ridicule their subjects. Alex Haley snidely asks Malcolm X: ". . . if Caucasian whites are devils by nature, do you classify people by degrees of devilishness according to the lightness of their skin?" The Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan is interviewed by a man who takes mean pleasure in correcting Shelton's mispronunciations, errors of fact and lies; like a high school debater, the interviewer mocks, harries and corners Shelton. He might have done us a service had he tried to understand Shelton, tried to expose, with insight and detachment, the sores which exacerbate the Imperial Wizard and his followers.

But there is nothing uniform about this book. Kenneth Tynan's interview with Richard Burton is a rare delight. Tynan is deeply familiar with the dramatic milieu from which the actor springs, and he remains cool and perceptive in the face of Burton's rolling rhetoric. Their conversation combines the best of the interview as platform and as personal revelation. On the theater Burton has very individual and often colorful opinions: "I get no intellectual nourishment from Ionesco and the others. What the hell is a rhinoceros doing in a theater? You can't play it, it's boring to watch, it has no ideas, it has no magic, it has no poetry." He can be disarmingly honest about his motives and his needs: "As you can see, what interests me about the theater is that you can have extraordinary words to say." Nor is the actor always frivolous; Tynan asks him if he is afraid of death and Burton replies that it is not death so much as being forgotten which frightens him—"it's . . . the fear of being *nothing* that keeps me awake."

Other interviews in the book succeed in breaking through plastic public shells and revealing warm, rich, intelligent subjects; Frank Sinatra, the Beatles, Melvin Belli and Timothy Leary emerged far more real and likeable than they have ever appeared in the glass-eyed mass media.

Art Buchwald and Vladimir Nabokov offer the most explicit examples of the interview as put-on. Those who like Buchwald's style may be amused by his interview—I found it embarrassingly bad. The interviewer is that professional put-on, Marvin Kitman, whose "questions" create a strained counterpoint to the pundit's elaborate dance. Nabokov, on the other hand, manages to conduct an interview reminiscent of his books; it is rich in humor, irony, complexity and riddles.

The beauty of the true put-on is that you are never sure exactly *how* or *when* it is happening. What, for example, does one make of the following? Asked why he chose the name "Lolita" for his famous nymph, he intones: "For my nymphet I needed a diminutive with a lyrical lilt to it. One of the most limpid and luminous letters is 'L'. The suffix '-ita' has a lot of Latin tenderness and this I required too. . . . Another consideration was the welcome murmur of its source name, the fountain name: those roses and tears in 'Dolores'. . . . Dolores also provided her with another, plainer, more familiar and infantile diminutive: Dolly, which went nicely with the surname 'Haze', where Irish mists blend with a German bunny—I mean a small German hare [German term for hare is *Hase*]."

If politics is defined as a social perspective, this collection has some clearly political characteristics. For one thing, the book is full of a lot of self-consciously crude language and "candid" discussion of sexual, political and religious matters; the reader is frequently reminded how unique and brave all this is. Those who are hung up on Victorian morality will no doubt be delighted with this aspect of these interviews—*Playboy's* editors certainly are. Reading this book, one has the peculiar and irritating sensation that while, say, Madalyn Murray is carrying on like a medieval Crusader stampeding and whoring his way to the Holy Land, the interviewer and the editors are glancing at the reader over their shoulders as if to say, "Isn't this *wild*?" Incidentally, one might ask in passing if *Playboy's* attitude toward career or activist women is symbolized in their choice of the only two women interviewed in the collection—Ayn Rand and Madalyn Murray.

This book offers only the *appearance* of political dialectic; what emerges is

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syncopation. Political discussion is hollow and nowhere do the interviewers point to or question the basic political assumptions of their subjects. It becomes obvious that interviewers, editors and most of the subjects (except for the "extremists") share these assumptions, see them as Facts. The book reeks of complacency.

Into the Mainstream: Conversations with Latin American Writers

LUIS HARSS & BARBARA DOLMAN

Harper & Row, $7.95

SAUL MALOFF

Last year, assisted by no private foundation or other cover for the visible or invisible government, I undertook, on their native ground, a series of discussions with Puerto Rican writers and intellectuals—novelists and dramatists, critics and editors, university professors and poets. Some were my friends; others, cordial acquaintances; so talk was, to say the least, uninhibited. As Dean Rusk and Lyndon Johnson can never understand (for reasons which lie beyond knowledge and hence all possibility of persuasion), writers and intellectuals of an "underdeveloped" nation, with so few exceptions as to make no difference, are nationalists—whatever else they may be; and nationalism these days involves, as night does day, and heaven earth, powerful anti-American, anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist emotion that lies beyond politics.

Among Puerto Rican writers, the specific form of the general emotion is "Independentist"—the lovely and quixotic aspiration that was overwhelmingly swamped (perhaps drowned for the reckonable future) in the recent plebiscite, which reflected the self-interest of the hot-handed Commonwealth entrepreneurs. In the intense heat of discussion, questions of literature, general culture and politics lost their (artificial) boundaries and flowed together; and since the Yankee imperialist was in remote Washington (and remoter Vietnam), and I was close to hand, and in the half-light (we were sitting on an elegant, darkened terrace) all Yankee imperialists look alike, they forgot who I was (or remembered too well), and—old allegiances suspended—charged me with my people's crimes against humanity and art.

They had read Melville and Faulkner and Bellow in the original; why had *we* not read their work? Why were we ignorant of Spanish? We were cultural barbarians, Goths, Vandals. We had plundered and exploited them—and all in the conqueror's language. We didn't even bother to translate them—so we didn't even know there *was* an indigenous literary culture. We were cultural as well as economic and political imperialists. On that and other evenings in the torrid atmosphere (which always ended with raised glasses and joyous song: nothing *personal* was meant), we explored all imaginable reasons, including conspiratorial ones, for the gringos' benighted ignorance of Puerto Rican letters; save the one that there was perhaps little or none of the first rank—to which suggestion, had I dared make it, they might have replied with justice that this does not prevent us from translating less-than-great books from other languages.

The scene now shifts to New York, June 1966, the International Congress of P.E.N.—an occasion slightly tainted (it was later disclosed) by some funding from a C.I.A. cover foundation, but balanced, by way of opulent gesture and cautious détente, by the presence of some Communist writers (most notably the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda), who were permitted by the State Department to infiltrate our shores, provided they got out before they could do real damage. (Bad enough that Neruda read poems to a packed house at the 92nd Street YMHA Poetry Center, and was greeted with an intensely emotional standing ovation.)

The most striking episode of that week in June (during the course of which African and Asian writers were taken to see a performance of "Annie Get Your Gun") occurred when the Latin American delegation, by far the strongest of the Congress, called an unscheduled meeting—to protest, well, cultural imperialism, our failure to translate their work, and so on through the familiar list of charges—all of them true. Years ago, I had myself disinterestedly tried to interest certain New York publishers in books (some novels and a couple of volumes of short stories) by Puerto Rican writers. Their tentative, welcoming smiles (they couldn't be sure I mightn't have a good thing going for both of us) froze finally, and then in a briskly businesslike way they asked whether any of them spicks could *really* write—you know, the way we do. And so negotiations collapsed.

But the impassioned accusations at P.E.N. were being made by distinguished writers of wide reputation. They were impressed with neither the rhetoric nor the achievements of the Alliance for Progress—knowing it for the sham it is. They were writers addressing writers and wanting to know how come in the international republic of letters, some constituencies were more equal than others: that some hold veto power, while others are disenfranchised.

Actually, their charges were not altogether true. Some of their work is beginning to trickle through—thanks to such houses as Knopf, Pantheon, Grove and New Directions; and the work of such heroic translators from the Spanish and Portuguese as Harriet de Onis, Andrew Kerrigan, and others. The book at hand is the occasion of this little homily; but not its point. It may be commended and disposed of briefly. Luis Harss offers a long critical-historical introductory essay on Latin American literature; and then —limiting himself to novelists and short-story writers only—follows this with ten chapters, each devoted to a single writer, and each a composite of critical survey and evaluation with interspersed interviews in which the subject delivers himself of remarks on divers matters relating to art and life, politics and society, love and death, sin and redemption, the devil and the flesh, and whatever else caught his attention as he sat for his portrait. Of the possible candidates for his Academy of Immortals, Harss chose in this order: Alejo Carpentier (Cuba); Miguel Angel Asturias (Guatemala); Jorge Luis Borges (Argentina); João

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Guimarães Rosa (Brazil); Juan Carlos Onetti (Uruguay); Julio Cortázar (Argentina); Juan Rulfo (Mexico); Carlos Fuentes (Mexico); Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia); and Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru).

Of these, Borges has begun to come into his own in this country, though his reputation is still largely underground. He is, without a doubt, one of the handful of living writers who will survive his own lifetime—one of the truly astonishing writers, a marvel and wonder to behold. Carpentier has long had a small but faithful following here; Fuentes is as much "American" as he is Mexican—cosmopolitan rather than Latin American; and the prodigiously gifted Cortázar and Rosa have, in the last few years, come to visibility, while the brilliant Vargas Llosa still awaits his turn. Imagine how dark a continent must be when such impressive creative vitality goes unheeded. You'd think, judging from our fine recklessness, that good writers lay about in such profusion, we have no need of others. No one can pretend to know the modern novel who does not know the work of these men; and it is in fact nothing other than "cultural imperialism" to pretend to.

Read them. If you have, Harss's book is nonetheless a useful supplement. If you have not, perhaps it will arouse interest, or guilt. In either case, the book serves the excellent purpose of reminding us that our brothers to the south produce more than loot for the make-out artists, superb summer skiing and the whitest, loveliest of beaches, more than bananas and colonels—*our* make-out artists and slopes and beaches, our bananas, our colonels.

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REVIEWERS

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RONALD CHRIST, an assistant professor of English at Manhattan, is writing a study of Borges' fiction.

FATHER RICHARD P. MC BRIEN is the author of *The Church in the Thought of Bishop John Robinson* (Westminster Press).

A Personal Anthology

JORGE LUIS BORGES

Grove, $5

RONALD CHRIST

Shakespearean, Dantesque—these words point to the totality of experience; *Dickensian, Kafkaesque*—these define a segment, a style of experience. A judgment is implicit in this distinction, yet the latter terms, like *Jamesian* and now *Borgesian*, are indispensable for the specification and clarification of our awareness. *Borgesian* is a word you will increasingly use; it is, in fact, a word we have always needed, and that of course is the measure of Borges' genius.

Borges' special province is a literature about literature. All his writings are about reading; each one contains a dual revelation. Typically, they tell of makers, authors or wizards who invent artificial creatures only to discover the sadness of a being who is unreal yet unaware of the fact; typically they conclude with the humiliating revelation that the maker is himself the creation of still another imagination. In the poem "The Golem," for example, Borges concludes with a description of Judah Lion, the rabbinical Dr. Frankenstein of Prague: "At the hour of anguish and vague light/ He would rest his eyes on his Golem."

But then Borges asks: "Who can tell us what God felt,/As He gazed on His rabbi in Prague?" This added Pirandellian dimension, at two removes from the created object, is the first revelation. The second, which is also an intimation of unreality, is that the reader himself is just another term in this infinite progression of creative, sustaining viewers: we make characters real by reading them and our own existence is equally tentative and dubious, resting entirely on the mind who is reading us, writing us now. Life is a literary dream.

The play within the play in *Hamlet* is one of Borges' favorite images exactly because it embodies this repetitive creative act, which is also an act of belief, at the same time that it suggests the ambiguous position of the "real" audience. Like Hamlet, the artist-villain in "Death and the Compass" stages a drama—this one to catch a detective. The detective-critic reads the plot correctly, and, Claudius-fashion, walks into the trap. Life itself is thus a game of chess: "God moves the player, he, in turn, the piece./But what God beyond God begins the round/of dust and time and dream and agonies?"

And as in chess, "stars and men revolve in a cycle," so that at the end of the story, the detective who now realizes his surrogate reality, advises the criminal to stage an improved, refined drama in the future, and the killer agrees: " 'The next time I kill you . . . I promise you the labyrinth made of the single straight line which is invisible and everlasting.'

"He stepped back a few paces. Then, very carefully, he fired." In this story a man learns what he is: precisely nothing, the phantasm of another intellect; and the reader, like the uncomfortable spectator at *Hamlet*, is left to feel that he too, perhaps, is a pawn playing a part.

Borges creates his fictions within fictions by tampering with our conventional responses to literature. He fills his works with allusions and citations, some real and some false, some to little known writings, other to famous or to nonexistent books. A footnote to a story, for example, establishes the order of fact (we know it is a fact because of its form), but when the fact is pedantically, fantastically false, then what are we to make of the fiction, which we also recognize by its form?

Similarly, when Borges introduces real people and actual books into the pseudo-factual company of his characters and their imaginary books, he recreates for us that sensation from our collective childhood when we discovered that the faceless woman on the Dutch Cleanser can carried a can with a similar picture on it. We saw that the third can did not, in fact, have another woman on it, yet we *knew* that another woman, and still another and another, were there. Our imagination foisted a profound fantasy on our senses, our mind contradicted our eyes, and our stomachs fluttered giddily. That was our first Borgesian experience.

It is not, then, the willing suspension

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of disbelief that Borges works for. On the contrary it is the unwilling suspension of belief in a literary reality that he achieves. Therefore it is appropriate that my copy of the most recently translated of his works, *A Personal Anthology*, should (I suppose accidentally) collaborate with Borges' intentions by moving, in the middle of a story, from page 148 to page 21 without even violating the narrative sense. The presumably defective volume resumes on page 181, clearly demonstrating that while Borges' themes are fantasies and artifices, it is reality he describes—and creates.

This book is comprised of works Borges considers his best. Unfortunately there is nothing of importance here that has not already been translated; and while we still have access to so little of his work in English, it is impossible to appreciate the choices Borges has made in collecting these poems, essays and narratives. For the best introduction to Borges, and for the most meaningful selection of his writings in English, we must still depend on the New Directions volume, *Labyrinths*.

Worldly Theology

CARL MICHALSON

Scribners, $5.95

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

The principal questions in contemporary Christian theology are secular in character. How can the post-biblical, post-medieval Christian continue to make sense of his faith in the light of his own contemporary experience (the secular meaning of the Gospel)? If, indeed, the world has "come of age" through the twin process of industrialization and urbanization, then what is to be the specific place of the Christian community (the secular mission of the Church)?

Radical theology must work at each of these points. It must have both a theoretical and a functional dimension. Carl Michalson has addressed himself to the first of these questions and he has insisted that the Christian can continue to make sense of his faith only through the eye-piece of history.

Dr. Michalson was a Methodist theologian who held the chair of systematic theology at Drew University from 1943 until his death in an airplane crash in 1965. In this, his final work, he argues that Christian (i.e., Protestant) theology of the past fifty years has been historicist in orientation. "Historicism is the point of view which conceives of history as the only knowable reality and therefore of historical method as the way of knowing reality. . . . History is the only reality man knows, so that the possibility of man's significance in the world is exclusively an attribute of what he finds in history."

Consequently, nothing is to be claimed in theology which is not at the same time history. All other questions (e.g., the attributes of God, the pre-existence of Christ, the nature of the Church) are irrelevant and should be discarded. And this principle must apply as well to the question of being (upper or lower case). The only legitimate theological issues are those which raise the question of meaning for man, in which case they become historical questions. For history always involves meaning, meaning involves interpretation, and interpretation involves hermeneutical risk.

He develops this thesis in two ways: the first eight chapters are experiments in the possibility of worldly theology, through the medium of some major movements in modern thought (existentalism, linguistic analysis, demythologization, later Heideggerian philosophy, etc.); and the last four chapters attempt to focus more sharply on the terms in which such a theology may find expression. With the possible exception of the chapters on Karl Heim and John Wesley (which, despite their excellence, seem to be introduced artificially), the earlier chapters are consistently lucid, fresh, and stimulating, in the highest tradition of survey literature and commentary. On the basis of these essays alone, the book can be recommended as a wise and useful guide to contemporary theological questions.

The last four chapters, however, present a more ambiguous image. On the one hand, Michalson has some splendid things to say about the nature and function of systematic theology, carrying forward his earlier critique of Heinrich Ott and the later Heidegger. But, at the same time, for all his insistence on secularity, worldly theology, and historicism, Michalson comes through at so many points as an essentially conservative and evangelical theologian. Whereas he makes several useful references to Friedrick Gogarten, a theologian of considerable (and ever-growing) influence today, he does not really carry through with Gogarten's insights in the way in which Harvey Cox, for example, has been able to do. I have the feeling, in fact, that Michalson's approach to secularity is slightly tinged with a kind of theological schizophrenia. John Wesley seems to come through just as the celebration of the secular moves into high gear.

There are also striking omissions. In a book on the historical character of Christian faith and theology, one should expect to find some critical mention of Oscar Cullmann, Alan Richardson, and, in particular, Wolfhart Pannenberg. Reinhold Niebuhr merits a warm reference early in the book, but, like Melchizedek, he soon disappears from the scene entirely. Catholic theologians receive scanty attention, but this is more a commentary on contemporary Catholic theology than on the ecumenical sensitivity of the author.

Some comment must also be made concerning Dr. Michalson's theological method. He argues, on the one hand, that theology must be resolved to make no statements about reality which do not involve the question of the meaning of man's existence. At the same time, he insists that theology can import no criteria into the interpretation of the Biblical faith which the Bible does not itself supply or confirm. It will read the Bible as history. However, Michalson must come to the Bible with a certain pre-comprehension of the meaning and significance of history. I do not quarrel with this because it cannot be avoided. But then we are in no position to suggest that extrinsic criteria have not been imported in the first place.

These few reservations notwithstanding, *Worldly Theology* is a competent

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and intellectually engaging report by a competent and intellectually gifted theologian on the contemporary state of Christian theology. The entire theological community is the poorer for his loss, but the richer for his legacy.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 597)

fellowship and peace—will probably almost always be required for large assemblies, though obviously they need recasting into contemporary idiom. Only when they are carried over into a small closely knit group clustered close to the altar do they seem so incongruous, so artificial. The celebrant reminds you of a man who was a great toastmaster at the noon banquet but is now continuing the same style at the evening meal with his family.

I fear Mrs. Haughton's one-sided emphasis on small groups risks repeating this historical mistake in reverse. If bringing the formalities of large-scale celebrations into a small intimate group makes you yawn, bringing intimacies into the public arena can make you wince. FRANCIS B. SULLIVAN, C.PP.S.

One Priest's Experience

To the Editors: As a member of the liturgical underground, I would like to comment on Rosemary Haughton's "Open Experiments" in the Aug. 25 issue. First of all, we feel we are doing a service by testing our insights into liturgical reform so we may make these available to the universal Church. It is a bit of a shock to be charged with destroying unity and encouraging spiritual snobbery. Given the lack of adequate episcopal leadership in this area, we feel that what we are doing is essential to the creation of a truly relevant liturgy and that it will eventually promote a far deeper unity in the Church.

My main point, however, is that the four years of experiments in small, select communities which Miss Haughton proposes is not necessary, because it has already been going on for the past four years, since the Constitution on the Liturgy appeared. We are now ready for what she considers Stage 2, the application of the insights gained to the normal parish.

Let me explain. The Constitution said the reformed liturgy should "grow organically from forms already existing," that it should be "short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions," and that there should be "legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples." It also authorized use of the mother tongues. At that time, several small communities in each diocese should have been designated to apply these principles in an experimental way, and the insights gained should have been promptly applied to the parishes. Instead, official experiments have been quite rare; changes in the parishes have been in the right direction, but far too slow for what the situation demands. This is why many priests have gone ahead without approval to apply the principles of reform found in the Constitution. There has been ample testing of the new ideas; to propose further experiments now is just a way of postponing urgently needed reform in the parishes.

I will illustrate the kind of insight I mean from my own experience. I celebrated Mass during the past year with a group of about 30, mostly young adults. We began the year with the pure Roman rite and gradually applied the principles of reform from the Constitution. This included stripping away from the essential structure most of the accidental prayers—those at the foot of the altar, Kyrie, Gloria, Creed, all the antiphons, all the priest's silent prayers (munda cor, communion prayers, etc.), all genuflections, the lavabo, etc. We then enriched this bare structure by the singing of folk-type songs, by using 3 or 4 different English canons, and by adding about 10 minutes of discussion following the homily. In order to make these discussions more relevant, I selected new scripture readings each day.

We found that this liturgy welded a group of about 30 people who barely knew each other into a very close-knit Christian community. I think this effect was produced primarily by the discussions, in which individuals revealed their own personal faith to others. Since this self-revelation implied a trust in the group, the discussions were the crucible in which a deep union of persons in Christ was produced. The celebration of the Eucharist in this atmosphere took on a depth of meaning I had never experienced before. I am convinced that this kind of union and love of one another was what distinguished first-century Christians from their pagan contemporaries. The insight I offer to the contemporary Church is that the Eucharist, if properly celebrated, can still produce this unity among persons.

A pastor who wants to move in this direction could begin with the daily-Mass group. He could move the Mass out of the cavernous church into a room just large enough for the group, and have more Masses in the evening. He should then approach his people in a familiar way, invite them to discuss the meaning of the gospel with him, to stand about the altar during the Eucharistic prayer and communion, etc. In some places, it should be possible to further simplify the rite, have communion in both forms occasionally, etc. As to Sunday Masses, the numbers are usually too large to permit a thoroughly relevant celebration, but some progress can be made. The real solution here is to drop the Sunday obligation and encourage people to attend Mass once a week (any day).

Those of us who have experienced a relevant liturgy are truly pained that so few can share this experience with us. We feel that the principles of reform from Vatican II have already been proven valid; it is now up to pastors to bring to their people the full riches of the Mass. NAME WITHHELD

Support for Fulbright

Webster Groves, Mo.

To the Editors: If William V. Shannon is going to take on Senator Fulbright in an intellectual "guerrilla war" (Sept. 8) he had better learn his opponent's arguments. Shannon's understanding of Fulbright's foreign aid and

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overseas involvement position is faulty when he says that Senators Fulbright and Morse "obviously do not have their priorities in order" in leading the fight against the overseas involvement and filibuster of the United States, and the fight "to cut the request for economic funds." Although Senator Morse frequently does sound a bit like a latter-day Populist in his attacks on foreign aid and filibuster, this criticism misses the mark when aimed at Senator Fulbright.

Fulbright has argued eloquently in his *Arrogance of Power* that many of our "commitments" overseas, particularly in Latin America, are nothing but bogus gunpoint treaties used to shore up the credibility of our economic empire. This worldwide great trade robbery is the basis of the American Empire and is controlled by the fear of a quick dispatch of Marines. Remove the right of the President to send in troops and what few Latin American leaders who can still speak for their people may have second thoughts about nationalizing U.S.-owned industry.

Take President Frei of Chile for example. This "hope" for Latin America has grown more than disillusioned by the mistrust our State Department has shown his more than mild economic reforms. Remove the fear of U.S. retaliation and Frei might do what Chile must do if it is to be economically independent: nationalize the U.S.-and British-owned mines and mills. Mexico was only able to escape our economic clutches because of the resolution of Stimson and Roosevelt not to send troops in to protect "our" oil and the approaching fear of World War II, which made it imperative to placate the land on our broad southern border. When we can't or won't send in the Marines, then wherever our economic policies are exploitive there will be a quick readjustment. Sometimes this readjustment will opt for a Fidelista model, sometimes not. Any political or military paternalism at this point by the United States is in Fulbright's estimation "arrogance" and "imperialism."

In questioning Fulbright's views on foreign aid, Shannon again misses the mark. Fulbright is no foe of foreign aid. He is, however, against the manner U.S. aid is administered; the basis on which aid is given; and frequently to whom it is given. Sen. Fulbright has written that since "aid" must be spent on U.S. products this "non-violently" extends our burgeoning economic-political empire; which eventually will have to be protected militarily. Further, the Administration gives aid to "anti-Communist" governments, which frequently means the most odious right-wing dictatorships. Even non-military aid then becomes an extension of our State Department's nearsightedness. Fulbright attacks the "half a loaf is better than none" philosophy that causes many liberal congressmen to vote for foreign aid. In fact, little assistance ever gets to the people the liberals most want it to. These "aye" votes, "helping to feed the world," continue a very damaging myth that apparently even Mr. Shannon believes: that we are already doing a great deal for the world through our aid programs.

But Fulbright does not just attack in this war. Like any good guerrilla he leaves his opponent an avenue of escape. He first of all offers the alternative that aid should be administered by the United Nations where economic and social needs, not State Department myopic world views, would decide what country gets what. Secondly, Fulbright argues that it is not "aid" as it is commonly understood (food, tractors, money loans) that the underdeveloped world needs. Loans, for example, must be repaid, increasing the creditor dependence of the borrowing state. The poorer nations of the world need justice from the United States and the rest of the white Atlantic community, and justice is coined in favorable trade balances, and fair prices for raw materials. This will allow a Chilean government to regulate the accumulation of capital needed for industrialization and diversification. Present "aid" programs merely continue the loan shark-pigeon relationship, don't attack the root causes of poverty, and more often than not don't even bandage the more visible surface wounds.

Fulbright, his priorities very clear, sees the relationship between our foreign aid, and the ultimate need to dispatch Marines. To be against one is to be against the other and to be for the ultimate integrity of the developing world.

RORY V. ELLINGER

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